

MICHIGAN FUTURE, INC.

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Senator Judy K. Emmons
Chair, Senate Families Committee
201 Townsend Street, Suite #4400
Lansing, MI 48933

January 29, 2018

Dear Senator Emmons,

Michigan Future, Inc. does not take positions on specific legislation or ballot initiatives. But we have laid out a policy framework that we think can best help achieve the goal of rising household income for all Michiganders.

One of the levers we identify to achieving that goal is supporting marriage. We, like the Michigan Catholic Conference, think that a recent Minnesota law that does not count the assets of one spouse for some time after marriage is an idea that is worth replicating here in Michigan.

In our *Sharing prosperity with those not participating in the high-wage knowledge-based economy policy report* we lay out our case for making supporting marriage a priority this way:

"We all know that married households do better on a wide range of economic and social well-being measures. As then British Prime Minister David Cameron said as part of his Life Chances speech: "Families are the best anti-poverty measure ever invented. They are a welfare, education and counseling system all wrapped up into one. Children in families that break apart are more than twice as likely to experience poverty as those whose families stay together. That's why strengthening families is at the heart of our agenda."

The challenge for policymakers is that many programs designed to encourage marriage have not proven to be effective. Policy can reduce economic stress on families. And that almost certainly is a major impediment to couples marrying and staying married.

Cameron continued: "We've significantly increased the help we offer on childcare, introduced shared parental leave so families can be there for one another at the most stressful time — the birth of a child. We've backed marriage in the tax system and 160,000 couples have taken up the preventative relationship support that we have funded over the last 5 years."

All are policy changes Michigan should consider. We also should support a recently enacted Minnesota law that does not count the assets of one spouse in determining safety net program eligibility for 18 months after marriage."

If you have any questions or comments on this, please don't hesitate to contact me at 734-747-8120 or lou@michiganfuture.org

Sincerely,



Lou Glazer
President

cc: members, Senate Families Committee